

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 0251

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VS, FI

SUBJECT: FINNISH SWITCH TO SUPPORT PRG AT LOW
CONFERENCE

REF: HELSINKI 200; HELSINKI 208; HOUSTON/CLEMENT
FEB 3, 1975 MEMCONS

1. BASED ON DISCUSSION WITH OUR SOURCES WE CONCLUDE
THAT FINNISH DECISION TO SWITCH FROM THAT OF AB-
STAINING TO SUPPORTING PRG PARTICIPATION AT LOW
CONFERENCE WAS MADE IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER.

2. FIRST OF ALL, GENERAL QUESTION OF PRG PARTICIPA-
TION IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES ALONG WITH RVN HAS BEEN
DISCUSSED FOR SOME TIME BOTH WITHIN MFA AND FINNISH CONSULT-
ATIVE COMMITTEE ON UN AFFAIRS. (FCC), AS WELL AS IN PRESS
AND VARIOUS POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTIES. WE
ARE TOLD THAT THE FCC IN JANUARY 1975 DECIDED RECOMMEND
TO MFA CHANGE IN GOF POLICY TO THAT OF SUPPORTING
PRG PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES.
FCC COMPOSED OF POLITICAL AND NON-POLITICAL EXPERTS,
REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL SIGNIFICANT SHADES OF POLITICAL
OPINION, AND SOURCE LINKED WITH SDP SAYS FCC
JANUARY DECISION WAS UNANIMOUS. FCC RECOMMENDATION
APPARENTLY ACCEPTED IN MFA, WHICH HAD TO PREPARE OWN
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PROPOSAL FOR CONSIDERATION BY GOF. WE NOTE THAT

MFA'S ACCEPTANCE OF FCC VIEW MAY REFLECT GREATER INFLUENCE OF SDP MEMBERS IN MFA, DEPARTURE OF SOME FORMER STALWARTS FROM MFA, AND FACT THAT COMING OUT IN SUPPORT OF PRG MAY BE POLITICALLY USEFUL TO FON MIN KARJALAINEN. FURTHERMORE, MFA UNDER BROAD ATTACK FOR ADHERING TO OUTMODED POSITIONS AND WAYS OF DOING BUSINESS.

3. GOF DECISION APPARENTLY LONG IN THE MAKING. KARJALAINEN ON MORNING OF JAN 30 TOLD AMBASSADOR NO DECISION YET REACHED, BUT THIS PROBABLY TRUE ONLY IN FORMAL SENSE. WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT IN FACT MFA AT LEAST HAD ALREADY MADE UP ITS MIND. THAT SAME AFTERNOON FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUB-GROUP OF CABINET MET. IT IS MOST LIKELY THAT PRG QUESTION WAS TAKEN UP AT THIS MEETING AND THERE IT WAS DECIDED PROPOSE NEW POLICY TO PRESIDENT KEKKONEN AT REGULAR FRIDAY COUNCIL OF STATE MEETING (JAN 31).

4. SINCE MFA OFFICER TELEPHONED EMBASSY ABOUT GOF DECISION FRIDAY AFTERNOON, THE PRESUMPTION IS THAT FINAL FORMAL APPROVAL WAS GIVEN BY KEKKONEN AT FRIDAY MORNING COUNCIL OF STATE MEETING. HOWEVER, WE ARE TOLD MFA NORMALLY CHECKS OUT THIS TYPE OF QUESTION WITH KEKKONEN BEFORE IT IS TAKEN UP IN EITHER CABINET FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUB-GROUP OF COUNCIL OF STATE, AND WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THIS PRACTISE WAS NOT FOLLOWED ALSO IN THIS CASE. THUS KEKKONEN ALSO APPEARS NOT TO HAVE FOUGHT FCC RECOMMENDATIONS.

5. EVERYONE WE HAVE TALKED TO IS TRYING TO SPREAD "BLAME" FOR DECISION. THERE IS PROBABLY CONSIDERABLE TRUTH IN THIS BECAUSE IDEA OF AN "ACTIVE" FINNISH FOREIGN POLICY ENJOYS CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC SUPPORT AND FURTHERMORE WE HAVEN'T FOUND ANY DISGRUNTLED PERSONS WILLING TO "FINGER" A PRIME MOVER.

6. FINNISH RATIONALE FOR LOW ACTION IS A NEW INTER-
PRETATION OF NEUTRALITY REQUIRING THEM TO SUPPORT
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ALSO PARTICIPATION BY PRG, IF RVN PARTICIPATES IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. THIS BEING CASE, FINNS ARE NOT OPEN TO ARGUMENTS THAT PRG NOT GOVERNMENT, THAT PRG/DRV AGGRESSORS WHO HAVE BROKEN PARIS AGREEMENTS, OR THAT PRG LACKS POPULAR SUPPORT IN SOUTH VIET-NAM. WE INCLINED ACCEPT ALSO GOF CLAIMS THAT NEW POSITION NOT IMMEDIATE RESULT OF DIRECT SOVIET

PRESSURE.

7. WE EXPECT FINLAND FROM NOW ON TO PURSUE A POLICY OF VOTING IN SUPPORT OF PRG PARTICIPATION IN ANY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES WHERE GVN IS PRESENT. WE ALSO EXPECT GOF IN NEAR FUTURE TO ELEVATE STATUS OF PRG INFORMATION OFFICE IN HELSINKI TO LEVEL SIMILAR THAT OF PRG REPRESENTATION IN STOCKHOLM OR PARIS. AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING WE CAN PROBABLY ACCEPT AS GENUINE FONMIN KARJALAINEN'S UNEQUIVOCAL STATEMENT TO AMBASSADOR ON JAN 30 THAT GOF HAS NO INTENTION FORMALLY RECOGNIZE PRG.

8. WE DON'T BELIEVE GOF ACTION AT LOW CONFERENCE SHOULD BE VIEWED AS ANTI-AMERICAN GESTURE OR CONSCIOUS DECISION TO PUT MORE DISTANCE BETWEEN IT AND USG, BUT RATHER A NATURAL RESULT AND OUTGROWTH OF FINLAND'S NEW "ACTIVE" NEUTRALITY POLICY. THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT THERE ARE CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC PRESSURES (BUT NOT UNANIMOUS) FOR SUPPORT OF PRG, CHILEAN REFUGEES, AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, ETC. GOF LEADERSHIP SEEMS CONSIDER US LESS RELEVANT TO FINLAND THAN BEFORE AND FEARS OUR DISCONTENT LESS THAN IT DOES THE INCREASING PRESSURE OF ELEMENTS OF FINNISH PUBLIC OPINION FAVORING THE THIRD WORLD POSITIONS.

9. BY SEPTTEL WE WILL PRESENT FOR DEPARTMENT'S CONSIDERATION OPTIONS FOR US TO FOLLOW IN LIGHT OF NEW GOF POLICY.
KREHBIEL

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